28.(Amended) A reduced polysaccharide iron oxide complex according to claim 27, wherein the amount of derivatization of the reduced dextran is at least about 1,100 micromole of carboxyl groups per gram of polysaccharide.

29.(Amended) A reduced polysaccharide iron oxide complex according to claim 26, wherein the amount of derivatization of the reduced dextran is less than about 1500 micromole of carboxyl groups per gram of polysaccharide, wherein said complex remains a colloidal suspension without substantial aggregation.

35.(Amended) An improved method of administering to a mammalian subject a polysaccharide, the improvement utilizing a composition producing decreased edematous response in comparison with utilizing unmodified polysaccharide and otherwise identically administered, wherein the improvement comprises utilizing for administration a derivatized reduced polysaccharide composition, and in derivatizing the polysaccharide, providing an extent of derivatization sufficient to produce decreased edematous response of the derivatized composition.

36.(Amended) An improved method of administering to a mammalian subject a polysaccharide, wherein the composition includes dextran, the method utilizing a composition producing decreased edematous response in comparison with utilizing unmodifed dextran otherwise identically administered, wherein the improvement comprises utilizing for administration carboxymethylated reduced dextran in lieu of dextran, and in carboxymethylating the dextran, providing an extent of carboxymethylation sufficient to produce decreased edematous response of the derived composition.

39.(Amended) A method according to claim 36, further comprising sterilizing the composition by autoclaving.

40.(Amended) A method according to claim 39, wherein the subject is in need of a plasma extender.

41.(Amended) A method according to claim 36, further comprising providing a solution of an iron salt to form a carboxymethylated reduced dextran iron colloid formulation producing decreased edematous response.

42.(Amended) A method according to claim 41, further comprising sterilizing the carboxymethylated reduced dextran iron formulation by autoclaving.

43.(Amended) A method according to claim 42, wherein the subject is in need of iron.

45.(Amended) A method according to claim 41 of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the type including a polysaccharide-derived iron oxide MRI contrast agent, the improvement producing decreased edematous response in a subject in comparison with an unmodified polysaccharide contrast agent, wherein the improvement comprises administering to the subject an effective dose of the agent to obtain enhanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of a tissue or organ.

46.(Amended) A method of magnetic resonance imaging according to claim 45, wherein the improvement further comprises administering an effective dose of the agent to obtain an MRI, followed within a single clinical visit by administering a further effective dose, to obtain a further MRI.

Please add new claims 57-66 as follows:

57.(New) An improved method of the type for deriving a composition for pharmacological use from a polysaccharide, the improvement providing a composition producing decreased edematous response in comparison with that associated with a composition otherwise identically derived using unmodified polysaccharide, wherein the improvement comprises: reducing and carboxyalkylating the polysaccharide, and, in carboxyalkylating the polysaccharide, providing an extent of carboxyalkylation sufficient to produce a decreased edematous response of the derived composition.

58.(New) A method according to claim 57, wherein the pharmacological use is in vivo administration to a mammalian subject as a plasma extender.

59.(New) An improved method of the type for deriving a composition for pharmacological use from a dextran, the improvement providing a composition producing decreased edematous response in comparison with that associated with a composition otherwise identically derived using unmodified dextran, wherein the improvement comprises: reducing and carboxymethylating the dextran, and, in carboxymethylating the dextran, providing an extent of carboxymethylation sufficient to produce decreased edematous response of the derived composition.

60.(New) A method according to claim 59, having the further step after the reacting step of sterilizing the carboxymethylated reduced dextran composition.

61.(New) A method according to claim 60, having the further step after the sterilizing step of providing the sterile composition as a single dosage unit.

62.(New) A method according to claim 60, having the additional step of administering the composition to a mammal in need of a plasma extender.

63.(New) A product for use as a plasma extender produced by the improved method of claim 60.

64.(New) A reduced derivatized polysaccharide iron oxide complex which is stable at a temperature of about 121°C, wherein the sodium salt of the complex does not contain an infrared absorption peak in the region of about 1650 $cm^{-1}$ to about 1800 $cm^{-1}$.

65.(New) A reduced derivatized polysaccharide iron oxide complex according to claim 64, such polysaccharide being carboxyalkylated.

66.(New) A reduced derivatized polysaccharide iron oxide complex according to claim 65, such polysaccharide being carboxymethylated.